

biopharmaceutical and medical technology companies in New Jersey to Hurricane Sandy relief activities.

New Jersey companies in the biopharmaceutical field have donated an estimated \$11.1 million towards Sandy relief efforts. The New Jersey biopharmaceutical and medical technology companies made contributions to a large number of organizations, including the American Red Cross, AmeriCares, Direct Relief International, Feeding America, the Salvation Army, Save the Children, United Way, and the Hurricane Sandy New Jersey Relief Fund.

The community also coordinated with the Department of Health and Human Services to ensure an uninterrupted supply chain of critical life-saving drugs as well as having teamed up with local pharmacies to provide free or discounted prescriptions to affected patients. In addition, individual companies performed a variety of services in the immediate aftermath of Sandy, including the distribution of hygiene kits; providing generators to local municipalities; deploying emergency decontamination units; preparing food for first responders; and working to supply hospitals, pharmacies, and retailers with supplies that their patients and customers needed.

While our community as a whole came together to provide relief to the victims of Sandy, we thank the biopharmaceutical industry of New Jersey.

THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE PRESIDENT'S PROPOSED BUDGET

(Mr. PITTENGER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTENGER. Mr. Speaker, there is much that could be said about the President's proposed budget, but I think ordinary taxpayers need to know its impact on jobs and the economy.

Economists and national accounting firms have stated that the tax increases that President Obama pushed through in January have slowed the economy and contributed to a loss of 24,000 retail jobs in March, part of a very dismal jobs report. When consumers have less money in their pockets, the inevitable results in fewer jobs.

Apparently, President Obama has not learned from his mistake. His budget contains almost \$600 billion in even more new taxes. At a time when millions of Americans are giving up hope of finding jobs and are exiting the workforce, President Obama's budget will only inflict more pain on ordinary families.

House Republicans have passed a responsible budget that leads to balance while also preserving Social Security and Medicare. Let's work together for fiscally accountable government that will help restore jobs to American families.

REDUCING GUN VIOLENCE IN AMERICA

(Mr. KILDEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, today, the Senate is taking up commonsense legislation to help reduce gun violence in America.

I have and always will be a staunch supporter of the Second Amendment, and I strongly support the constitutional rights of my constituents to own guns. This bipartisan legislation to expand background checks does not infringe on the rights of law-abiding gun owners. Instead, it strengthens our existing system of background checks to help keep guns out of the hands of dangerous offenders.

Forty percent of guns sold in the United States currently don't go through background checks. Failing to act means that just anyone can continue to buy weapons at gun shows or over the Internet without being subject to a background check. The vast majority of Americans support background checks. Democrats and Republicans support background checks. The vast majority of responsible gun owners support background checks.

It is commonsense legislation that should be enacted, and it will make our country safer. I urge the House to take this up as soon as the Senate completes its work.

KEYSTONE XL WILL HELP LOWER UTILITY RATES

(Mr. DAINES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DAINES. Mr. Speaker, last week, I was home in Montana to highlight the important role that natural resources play in our State's economy. In fact, I put 3,000 miles in traveling around our great State. One question I was asked repeatedly was: When will the Keystone pipeline be approved?

We all know the tremendous economic impact the Keystone pipeline would have and the jobs that would be created; but when I was in Glasgow, Montana, I learned of a relatively unknown benefit as a result of the pipeline.

You see, NorVal Electric Co-Op in Glasgow is slated to supply electricity to one of the Keystone XL pump stations. If the pipeline is built, this rural electric co-op will be able to spread its cost burdens with the pipeline and, consequently, hold rates steady for its 3,000-plus Montana customers. If the pipeline is not approved, it told me that NorVal customers will see upwards of a 40-percent increase in their utility rates over the next 10 years.

As I've said time and time again, this is common sense. Keystone means jobs; it means another step towards energy independence; and it means lower utility rates for rural Montanans, for hard-working Montana families.

President Obama, it's time to approve the Keystone pipeline.

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HUMANE IMMIGRATION REFORM

(Mr. VARGAS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. VARGAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to thank the faith-based communities in this country for praying for a humane and just immigration reform. We heard from the Chaplain today in his prayer, and we probably all caught the three references. The first one was from Leviticus 19, the issue of treating the foreign born as your own. Then we heard the Hebrews treating the stranger, treat him well because he may be the angel among you. And then of course, lastly, Matthew 25, treating the stranger because that's how you're going to be judged.

I want to thank each and every pastor, each and every priest, each and every rabbi that has been praying for us on this issue. I think that hardened hearts are changing here. Certainly the debate that we've been having has been humane. Much of the leadership has come from a bipartisan group of Democrats and Republicans with open hearts, and I appreciate that. And that has not happened by itself. It has happened because of the prayers and the supplication of all of these people around the Nation saying we have to do something that matches our values.

THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET

(Mr. LUETKEMEYER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, the President's just-released budget calls for higher taxes, more spending, and bigger government, all of which would make it more difficult for hard-working Americans, like those in the Third District of Missouri, to find jobs. More troubling yet is the President's budget simply does not balance. Every family must balance their budget, and we in Washington should, too. We cannot continue to spend money we don't have, and it's not right for the President to take more to spend more.

Several weeks ago, I proudly supported a Republican budget that provides for a balanced budget, will foster a healthier economy and help create jobs. The President's budget, meanwhile, holds any reforms and spending cuts hostage in exchange for more tax hikes.

The American people are tired of the same old song and dance from the President and his allies when it comes to spending their hard-earned tax dollars. This budget proposal, which is months overdue, isn't a serious plan.

Mr. Speaker, I'm from the "Show Me" State, and this budget doesn't show me anything.